

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended): A composition comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum pentosus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), in an amount of at least 10^6 cells/~~effective to stimulate mucosal immunity,~~ and an edible carrier, wherein the composition is in the form of a food or beverage for a mammal.

5. (canceled).

6. (previously presented): The composition according to claim 4, wherein said composition is a fermented milk, lactic acid bacteria beverage, fermented vegetable beverage, fermented fruit beverage, or fermented soymilk beverage.

7. (canceled).

8. (withdrawn): A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation, comprising administering to said human subject the composition of claim 4 or claim 17.

9. (canceled).

10. (withdrawn-currently amended): A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment, comprising, administering to said human subject the composition of claim 4 or 18.

11-15. (canceled).

16. (previously presented): The composition of claim 4, wherein said composition is in the form of granules, a powder, a tablet, an effervescent product or a pudding.

17. (currently amended): A pharmaceutical composition for human mucosal immunostimulation comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus ~~plantarum~~ pentosus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), in an amount of at least 10^6 cells/~~effective to stimulate mucosal immunity~~, and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.

18. (currently amended): A pharmaceutical composition for promoting human IgA production comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus ~~plantarum~~ pentosus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), in an amount of at least 10^6 cells/~~effective to promote human IgA production in mucus~~, and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.